

Friends' School, now Moses Brown School  
257 Hope Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-255

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
152-

PHOTOGRAPH  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

## FRIENDS' SCHOOL, NOW MOSES BROWN SCHOOL

Address: 257 Hope Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island.

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
152-

Present Owner: Society of Friends

Present Occupant: Moses Brown School

Present Use: School

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This is the original building of the early and  
prominent Friends' School in Providence, work of  
the architect John Holden Greene

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Society of Friends.
2. Date of erection: 1819
3. Architect: John Holden Greene
4. Notes on alterations and additions: The building has been greatly enlarged and altered, and other buildings erected on the grounds.
5. Sources of information: R. W. Kelsey, History of Moses Brown School (Providence, 1919).  
John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), pp. 87, 152.  
John Williams Haley, Providence Illustrated Guide (Providence: Haley and Sykes Company, 1931), p. 99.

- B. Historical Events Connected with Structure: Friends' School was opened in this building in 1819. The school was built on a large tract of land donated by Moses Brown in 1814. Moses Brown was a wealthy businessman, prominent in Quaker affairs, a brother of the businessmen John and Nicholas Brown, and of the architect and scientist Joseph Brown. The name of the school was changed in 1904 to Moses Brown School.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large, but simple brick school building, a work of John Holden Greene. It uses a well-established scheme for such buildings, first used in Providence for University Hall (The College Edifice) at Brown University, erected in 1770, Joseph Brown, architect. University Hall was patterned after Nassau Hall, Princeton, 1754-56, Robert Smith, architect. Greene used the same scheme again a few years later in Providence for the Dexter Asylum.
2. Condition of fabric: Good, but the original building has been extensively enlarged and altered.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions: Large central section, three-and-a-half stories high, five bays wide on an elevated basement; two-and-a-half story wings on elevated basement, ten bays wide to both sides. Later wings added at the ends.
2. Wall construction: Brick
3. Porches, stoops: Doric entrance porch at center of center section of building, one story high, single columns at the front corners, approached by a high flight of granite steps.
4. Chimneys: High brick chimneys in the side walls of center section.
5. Openings: Windows are double-hung; six-light sash.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gable roof over center section, gable end toward the front. High monitor on roofs of side wings similar to those used on the Dexter Asylum, probably with balustraded cornices originally.
  - b. Cupolas: Octagonal cupola over center section.

- C. Site: The building is situated on a large, level site, with adjoining later buildings, informal landscaping with lawn and large buildings.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby  
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